A/AC.172/1993/CRP.14/Add.15
16 September 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES
1993 substantive session
Agenda item 12*

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Imre Karbuczky (Hungary)

Addendum

I. CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

D. Improved organization of work and effective use of conference resources

2. Measures to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the use of conference-servicing resources

Introduction and overview

1. In accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 10 and 11 of General Assembly resolution 47/202 A of 22 December 1992, the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences held consultations with the chairmen of organs concerned, where the utilization factor was lower than the established benchmark figure for the last three years.

2. At its 356th meeting, on 15 September 1993, the Committee considered a report by the Secretariat on the results of the above-mentioned consultations (A/AC.172/1993/CRP.15 and Add.1).

3. On 30 January 1992 and 25 March 1993, in compliance with the requests of the General Assembly contained in paragraphs 9 to 12 of its resolution 46/190 of 20 December 1991 and in paragraphs 6 to 8 of its resolution 47/202 A and with decisions of the Committee on Conferences, the Chairman of the Committee wrote to the chairmen of United Nations bodies. Letters were also addressed to the secretaries of United Nations bodies outlining the provisions of the

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* A/AC.172/150/Add.1.

above-mentioned resolutions and suggesting various steps that could be taken to improve further the utilization of conference-servicing resources.

4. At its 356th meeting, the Committee also considered a report (A/AC.172/1993/CRP.16) prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of informal consultations with, and written replies transmitted by, subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.

Discussion

5. Optimism was expressed regarding the dialogue between the Chairman of the Committee and other United Nations organs and the prospects for improved utilization of conference services, which depended on the efforts of those organs and of Member States. There was general support for the adoption, where applicable, of the conclusions contained in document A/AC.172/1993/CRP.16, which should also provide an indication of notional costs.

6. Clarification was provided by the Secretariat regarding the organs whose utilization factor had been lower than the benchmark figure for the past three years. Concern was also expressed regarding organs whose use of conference-servicing resources exceeded forecasts.

Conclusions and recommendations

7. The Committee took note of the information presented in the reports.

8. The Committee welcomed the measures taken by some organs and urged all organs to spare no effort to improve their utilization factor. It also urged the Chairman to continue to hold consultations on the matter.

9. The Committee welcomed the conclusions presented in document A/AC.172/1993/CRP.16, with the inclusion of an indication of notional costs, and decided to recommend them to the General Assembly as measures to be implemented by all subsidiary organs, 1/ as applicable, in order to achieve the most efficient and effective use of conference-servicing resources.

Notes

1/ See annex to the present report.

Annex

MEASURES TO ENSURE OPTIMUM UTILIZATION OF CONFERENCE SERVICES

The Committee on Conferences should continue to play its role in informing and guiding subsidiary bodies, which in turn should maintain close contact with the Committee and seek its technical advice, so as to ensure the most efficient and effective utilization of conference resources. In addition, subsidiary bodies should be strongly encouraged to take the following measures, as applicable:

(1) Hold informal consultations, including pre-session briefings, so as to save formal meeting time, reduce the need for conference services and ensure the most efficient and effective utilization of conference resources;

(2) To the extent possible, reduce the duration of sessions, cancel scheduled meetings, with sufficient prior notice, and convene working groups in their place;

(3) Enhance efforts to improve the accuracy with which the number of fully serviced meetings is forecast especially in cases where exceptions are sought to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 40/243;

(4) Ensure that the secretary of the body consults with delegations before the opening of the session to ascertain whether some representatives would be prepared to speak on the first substantive item at the opening meeting;

(5) Set a deadline for closing the list of speakers for each agenda item in advance of the scheduled date of consideration of the item, and cancel meetings sufficiently in advance in the event that no delegation wishes to speak;

(6) Refrain from requesting evening meetings, save in very exceptional cases;

(7) Seek to use the time not fully utilized during the consideration of a particular agenda item, for the consideration of other items;

(8) Call meetings to order punctually at the scheduled time, without a quorum if necessary;

(9) Establish time-limits for speakers;

(10) Ensure compliance with the six-week rule for the distribution of documentation and the rules concerning the length of written reports;

(11) Review the list of documents requested for future meetings with a view to rationalizing it;

(12) Prepare shorter and more focused documentation;

(13) Submit the body's report on a biennial or triennial basis;

(14) Comply with the 32-page limit for reports;

(15) Review the need for summary records and relinquish the entitlement if possible;

(16) Restrict resolutions and decisions to matters directly related to governance and policies;

(17) Review the possibility of the electronic transfer of documentation;

(18) Select a limited number of major policy issues or themes for policy decision for in-depth consideration;

(19) Review the agenda to assess the possibility of merging or combining agenda items;

(20) Examine all proposals and views on methods of work and organization expressed during current and previous sessions, and draw up recommendations to improve the body's working methods and organization for consideration at its subsequent session;

(21) Ensure that the secretary of the body brings to the attention of members, as appropriate, any resolutions and decisions on the regulation of meetings and conferences, including directives on the allocation and utilization of conference resources;

(22) Ensure that the secretary of the body informs the members, at the beginning of each session, of the conference resources, including the number of meetings and the extent of interpretation services and their notional costs, made available to the body, and gives them a brief account, at appropriate intervals during the session, of the use they have been making of those resources.